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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PINR](#) [PINS](#) [PGOV](#) [ML](#)  
SUBJECT: MALI'S POLITICAL SEASON BEGINS - CONTROVERSIAL  
BOOK SMEARS ATT AND HIS ADMINISTRATION

REF: A. BAMAKO 01154  
[1](#)B. BAMAKO 01005  
[1](#)C. BAMAKO 00521

Classified By: Political Officer Aaron Sampson for reasons  
1.4 (b) and (d)

1.(S) Summary: The Rally for Mali (RPM) recently provided the Embassy with a bootleg copy of the anonymous book, "ATT-Cracy: The Promotion of a Man and his Clan," that has triggered a heated debate over the author's identity and the book's allegations of presidential corruption and abuse of power. Published last month in France under the pseudonym "Le Sphinx," "ATT-Cracy" is intended as a sweeping indictment of Amadou Toumani Toure's (ATT) presidency. Initial Sphinx suspects ranged from National Assembly President Ibrahim Boubcar Keita (who has denied any involvement) to a handful of disgruntled former Ministers. Outraged by the book's accusations, ATT has launched an investigation of his own (although the Malian leader has been criticized on the street -- and within his entourage -- for his failure to respond publicly to the charges). A recent letter reportedly from the Sphinx claims "ATT-Cracy" was written by a group of former and current members of the State Security forces. Although the book is largely a compilation of old and unsubstantiated rumors, the allegations -- along with the government's inaction in the face of fighting in Mali's north between Tuareg rebels and the GSPC -- have laid ATT and his government open to charges of weakness and corruption. Minister of Territorial Administration, General Kafougouna Kone, has emerged relatively unscathed from the controversy, and ATT will rely on Kone to steer his two central political issues in the coming months-- the Algiers Accords and the management of the 2007 elections. End Summary.

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Sphinx Sparks Scandal and Speculation  
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2.(C) In September the French printing house L'Harmattan published "ATT-Cracy: The Promotion of a Man and His Clan" by an anonymous author known as "le Sphinx." Several local newspapers subsequently published large extracts of the text, which remains difficult to locate in Bamako despite having reportedly already run through its initial printing of 30,000 copies in France. Last week boxes of photocopied bootleg versions of "ATT-Cracy" appeared at Rally for Mali (RPM) headquarters and the National Assembly office of presumed presidential challenger Ibrahim Boubacar Keita (IBK).

3.(C) The book accuses ATT, his family and most of his key Ministers of creating a "cult of personality" to facilitate rampant financial and political corruption. The Sphinx argues that ATT's consensus-model of politics is nothing more than window-dressing for a single-party, autocracy similar to

the one that was overthrown, in part by ATT himself, in 1991.

Although the accusations are largely unsubstantiated and at times far-fetched, "ATT-Cracy" nonetheless levels some potentially explosive, albeit ham-handed, allegations. These include claims that:

--former President Alpha Oumar Konare and ATT worked together to contrive a way for Mali's Supreme Court to void over 500,000 votes largely for IBK during the 2002 presidential election.

--France preferred ATT over other potential presidential candidates due to his "indecisive, furtive, irresponsible and double-crossing" personality.

--ATT allowed French Interior Minister Nicholas Sarkozy to use Mali a "lab experiment" for France's controversial selective immigration policy.

--the Office of the Auditor General, whose salary approaches more than USD 6,000 per month, was created to shield those close to ATT and threaten his opponents.

--ATT's children and family have benefited from large government contracts.

--the Aga Khan foundation, which owns Mali's only domestic airline and has a 35% stake in the public electric and water company, received preferential treatment from ATT based on Aga Khan's support of First Lady Toure Lobbo Traore's foundation for Malian children and development projects in ATT's home town of Mopti.

--Trade Minister Choguel Maiga enriched himself off the sale of cereal products intended to mitigate the effects of drought and hunger in Mali's rural areas.

--several upper level officials in Mali's Security and Defense Ministries, as well as key ATT allies including Solidarity Minister Djbril Tangara and Energy Minister Ahmed Semega, have enriched themselves at the government and peoples' expense.

--other political leaders not included in ATT's government, such as Alliance for Democracy in Mali (ADEMA) president Dioncounda Traore and CNID president Mountaga Tall, "sold their souls to the devil" to ingratiate themselves with ATT.

--ATT's status as the first Head of State to visit Iranian President Ahmadinejad and subsequent decision to rescind visa requirements for Iranian citizens "could turn our country into a transit site, even a sanctuary, especially in northern Mali, for eventual Iranian terrorists."

--ATT and First Lady Toure Lobbo Traore received large sums of cash from Libyan leader Qadhafi in return for authorization for Libya to open its ill-fated consulate in Kidal.

--ATT revealed his weakness by allowing Qadhafi to behave "as though he had conquered a new Libyan province" during his April 2006 visit to Timbuktu. "With Presidents Moussa Traore and Alpha Oumar Konare," writes the Sphinx, "Qadhafi would have never been allowed to behave this way."

#### ----- Seeking the Sphinx in the Security Forces -----

4.(C) In Mali, which is largely unaccustomed to this form of political mud-slinging, the publication of "ATT-Cracy" set off an immediate hunt for its author(s). ATT has reportedly charged National Assembly vice-president Mountaga Tall with identifying the Sphinx. Tall is the president of the National Committee for Democratic Initiatives (CNID), which holds 13 seats in the National Assembly and is one of the two parties that outmaneuvered IBK and the RPM for spots the now controversial Independent National Electoral Commission (ref A). Tall is also widely believed to harbor presidential ambitions for 2012. According to reports, Tall planned on traveling to Paris to meet with lawyers and pressure L'Harmattan to reveal the Sphinx's identity. At the same time, ATT has been widely criticized on the street here, and within his own circle, for his failure to respond publicly to the charges levied by the Sphinx.

5.(C) One of the first and most obvious suspects was National Assembly President, RPM leader and presumed presidential challenger IBK. Although IBK denied any connection to the Sphinx, his RPM party is eagerly selling photocopied versions of "ATT-Cracy" outside RPM events for approximately USD 20 a copy. After reading extracts of the text in the Malian press, many concluded that "ATT-Cracy" lacked the style and sophistication of a seasoned political leader like IBK.

6.(C) Another popular suspect is former Minister of Defense and Chief of Security Soumeylou Boubey Maiga. Maiga, who is seriously considering a presidential bid (ref B), has a professional resume that lends itself to such speculation given the Sphinx's detailed knowledge of the Malian security and defense forces. Maiga has also denied any link to the Sphinx and recently sued a local newspaper for libel after it ran a story accusing him of having delivered copies of "ATT-Cracy" to Malian media outlets. In a conversation with the Embassy, Maiga reiterated that he was not the Sphinx, suggesting that "ATT-Cracy" was the product of multiple authors within the Security forces, but offered to replace the Embassy's bootleg copy with an original first edition.

7.(C) On October 24 several newspapers published a letter purportedly from the Sphinx, identifying the authors of "ATT-Cracy" as members of the Malian Security forces and threatening to expose one presidential scandal per month from now until the April 2007 elections. "There is no reason to dispatch someone to Paris," said the letter in reference to Mountaga Tall's mission, "as our leaders are in the habit of doing in times of uncertainty. We are a group of active and former State Security agents. Our role is not to examine the character of a leader but to shine a light on his actions and deeds." The Sphinx, the letter concluded, "is not here to save the nation, since alone this is not possible, but to shock the State by ensuring that its secrets and cover-ups are put before the public eye so that each citizen is able to assume his responsibility."

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One ATT Ally Without Mud: General Kafougouna Kone  
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8.(C) While the Sphinx has slung mud at President Toure and most of his closest allies, one key figure in ATT's administration is portrayed in a positive light: Minister of Territorial Administration, General Kafougouna Kone. Although the RPM has pilloried Kone for signing the Algiers Accords with the Tuareg rebels and contriving to leave the

RPM off the Independent Election Commission, le Sphinx - who also vehemently denounces the Algiers Accords - has nothing but praise for General Kone. Referring to a meeting between Kone, the Tuareg rebels and Qadhafi's Cabinet Director in Kidal in April 2006 (ref C), the Sphinx writes: "In contrast to ATT, who is more complacent and weak toward the Libyans, General Kafougouna Kone had the merit to send Iyad ag Ghali packing and did not hesitate to give Qadhafi's Cabinet Director a piece of his mind over the question of Mali's territorial integrity."

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Comment:  
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9.(S) The Sphinx's charges are a combination of old news and innuendo, and the author or authors clearly have a political agenda. The claims of fraud in the 2002 presidential election, for example, represent a favorite theme of IBK, who has always maintained ATT "stole" the election from him. Most observers at the time, however, gave little credence to the charges. At the same time, allegations of high-level corruption feed the Malian public's perception that most ministers use their time in office to feed at the public trough. Whether any or all of the charges are proven to be accurate, ATT and his government have been weakened further by the controversy. Many southern Malians had already been

angered by their government's passive reaction to the Algerian-sponsored Tuareg attacks on the GSPC in the north, and the charges levied in "ATT-Cracy" only increase the heat on ATT and his key allies. In this regard, the Malian president will need to rely ever more on the soft-spoken Kone, who was ATT's commanding officer before the latter's 1991 coup, since the Minister has charge of both the implementation of the Algiers Accords and planning for the 2007 presidential and legislative elections.

McCulley